

# Beijing & Beidaihe, China: 5-8 Nov 2012.

*An at-a-glance list of 128 species of birds & two species of mammals recorded.*

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Please note that the following list is best considered a work in progress. It should not be quoted without consulting the author.

Based on my field notes, this brief write-up covers the birds noted at Beijing & Beidaihe by D Mirecki & myself during an add-on to a work visit to China's capital – to make the most of the time available no more than an outline plan had been made: general experience garnered over the years would allow us to 'play it by ear', depending on what the weather was doing. As we'd hoped, everything – the ease of the birdwatching, the food, comfortable & convenient accommodations - came together to produce a pleasant short break.

Our plans drew inspiration from four highly enjoyable visits to Beidaihe in autumns 2011 & 2012:

a four-nights-away extension to the 2011 Oriental Bird Club Fundraiser to NE Tibet  
(see [http://www.netfugl.dk/trip\\_reports/asia/China\\_Beidaihe\\_Aug2011\\_JesperHornskov.pdf](http://www.netfugl.dk/trip_reports/asia/China_Beidaihe_Aug2011_JesperHornskov.pdf) ),

a 'Pied Harrier Quest' over 12-19 Sep 2011  
(see [http://www.netfugl.dk/trip\\_reports/asia/China\\_Beidaihe\\_Sep2011\\_JesperHornskov.pdf](http://www.netfugl.dk/trip_reports/asia/China_Beidaihe_Sep2011_JesperHornskov.pdf) ),

a follow-up 'Pied Harrier Quest' over 2-8 Sep 2012  
(see [http://www.netfugl.dk/trip\\_reports/asia/China\\_Beidaihe\\_2-8Sep2012\\_JesperHornskov.pdf](http://www.netfugl.dk/trip_reports/asia/China_Beidaihe_2-8Sep2012_JesperHornskov.pdf) )

and an rewarding follow-up to *that* in mid-Sep 2012  
(see [http://www.netfugl.dk/trip\\_reports/asia/China\\_BeidaiheBeijing\\_Sep2012\\_JesperHornskov.pdf](http://www.netfugl.dk/trip_reports/asia/China_BeidaiheBeijing_Sep2012_JesperHornskov.pdf) )

Beidaihe - rediscovered in 1985 and almost instantly recognised as THE place to enjoy a superb range of E Asian migrants - had been receiving some poor reviews over the last 3-4 years, but in 2011 some good news at last: the local mudflats had been fenced-off to create an 'Ecological Restoration Area', virtually eliminating disturbance! In terms of ease of access (<2 hours by train from Beijing, or 3 hours by car from Beijing airport) & opportunities to view waders, gulls and terns we were suddenly and unexpectedly back to World Class!

Opportunities for local birding around Beijing, likewise, vary depending on the season and what the weather is doing. As luck would have it, the weather was 'interesting' during the days we had available: a massive cold front was sweeping across N China! On 3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> so much snow fell on the capital that driving into the mountains to the N on 5<sup>th</sup> was out of the question. Instead we opted for Botanical Gardens & Summer Palace before traveling by car to Beidaihe.

By mid-afternoon of 7<sup>th</sup> it was obvious that we'd already seen so much @ the Beidaihe area that we might be better off returning to Beijing, so this is what we did, and even before the sun had climbed above the snowy mountains at Wild Duck Lake the next morning we knew we'd done the right thing: we were watching the 5<sup>th</sup> crane species of our trip. Brown Eared Pheasant *Crossoptilon mantchuricum* (nowadays a one-night-away bird from Beijing at pretty much any time of the year) will have to wait until my companion's next visit!

Anyone considering China as a birding destination is welcome to contact the author at:

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**Mallard** *Anas platyrhynchos*

105+ bird-days. Noted on three dates – main event 80 at Wild Duck Lake on 8<sup>th</sup>.

**Chinese Spotbill** *Anas zonorhyncha*

Two at Beidaihe on 6<sup>th</sup> & 125 at Wild Duck Lake on 8<sup>th</sup>.

**Northern Shoveler** *Anas clypeata*

One male at Wild Duck Lake on 8<sup>th</sup>.

**Northern Pintail** *Anas acuta*

One at Beidaihe on 6<sup>th</sup>.

**Red-crested Pochard** *Netta rufina*

A pair at Summer Palace on 5<sup>th</sup> & two males at Wild Duck Lake on 8<sup>th</sup>.

**Common Pochard** *Aythya ferina*

15 on 8<sup>th</sup>.

**Baer's Pochard** *Aythya baeri*

One male flying around with six Ferruginous Ducks, then landing & allowing 'scope views, at Wild Duck Lake on 8<sup>th</sup>: TINGALING!

**Ferruginous Duck** *Aythya nyroca*

Eight at Wild Duck Lake on 8<sup>th</sup>.

**Tufted Duck** *Aythya fuligula*

Ten at Wild Duck Lake on 8<sup>th</sup>.

**White-winged Scoter** *Melanitta deglandi stejnegeri*

One at Beidaihe on 6<sup>th</sup>.

**Common Goldeneye** *Bucephala clangula*

135+ bird-days. Noted daily – main event 85 at Beidaihe on 6<sup>th</sup>.

**Smew** *Mergellus albellus*

80+ (incl a number of immaculate drakes looking very smart in the bright, wintry sunshine) at Wild Duck Lake on 8<sup>th</sup>.

**Goosander** *Mergus merganser*

62 bird-days. Noted daily – main event 35 at Wild Duck Lake on 8<sup>th</sup>.

**Red-breasted Merganser** *Mergus serrator*

One at Beidaihe on 6<sup>th</sup>.

**Little Grebe** *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

Five at Botanical Gardens & 11 at Summer Palace on 5<sup>th</sup>.

\*\*\*It was good to get views that allowed us to confirm that these birds had the white iris of ssp *poggei*, which also differs from the nominate in vocalizations...

**Great Crested Grebe** *Podiceps cristatus*

40 bird-days. Noted daily – main event 30 on the sea at Beidaihe on 6<sup>th</sup>.

**Slavonian Grebe** *Podiceps auritus*

At Beidaihe one on 6<sup>th</sup> & four on 7<sup>th</sup>.

**Black-necked Grebe** *Podiceps nigricollis*

Five at Beidaihe on 6<sup>th</sup>.

**Oriental White Stork** *Ciconia boyciana*

A flock of 275 migr at 10h28 on 7<sup>th</sup> – they appeared ‘without warning’ and passed in the best possible light so close that we could hear the *woosh* as the still air was cleaved by their mighty wings!

**Eurasian Spoonbill** *Platalea leucorodia*

Two bird-days - undoubtedly the same 1<sup>st</sup> c-y bird showing well at Beidaihe on both 6+7<sup>th</sup>.

**Grey Heron** *Ardea cinerea*

Nine bird-days. Noted at Beidaihe on both 6+7<sup>th</sup>.

**Great Egret** *Ardea alba*

At Beidaihe two on 6<sup>th</sup> & one on 7<sup>th</sup>.

**Little Egret** *Egretta garzetta*

At Beidaihe 24 on 6<sup>th</sup> & 18 on 7<sup>th</sup>.

**Great Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax carbo*

One 1<sup>st</sup> c-y migr at Beidaihe on 6<sup>th</sup>.

**\*\*\*Cormorant sp'** *Phalacrocorax sp*

13 headed S at Beidaihe at 14h30 on 6<sup>th</sup> – four adults in the flock looked a little dumpier than Great Cormorant (on the not-all-black 1<sup>st</sup> c-y birds the jizz was much harder to judge) but we just didn't see them well enough to clinch the ID as Temminck's Cormorant *P. capillatus*

**Saker** *Falco cherrug*

One perched on a mast at Wild Duck Lake on 8<sup>th</sup> – we were able to approach & got decent views through the 'scope.

**Peregrine** *Falco peregrinus*

Probably the same 1<sup>st</sup> c-y at Beidaihe throughout the day on 6<sup>th</sup> & PM on 7<sup>th</sup>, identified as a male on the last day.

\*\*\*Plenty of action on 6<sup>th</sup>: “took off... a Goldeneye was forced down to crash land: it rolled over violently upon impact on a narrow sandbar but got into the water. The falcon was soon at it again: it struck a white pigeon in the 2<sup>nd</sup> attempt, right over the reedbed in front of us. We watched it devour the prey, much bothered by the Common Magpies as it did so.”

**Hen Harrier** *Circus cyaneus*

Five bird-days. Noted on three dates.

**Eurasian Sparrowhawk** *Accipiter nisus*

Two at Botanical Gardens on 5<sup>th</sup> & one at Great Wall on 7<sup>th</sup>.

**Northern Goshawk** *Accipiter gentiles*

Two (an unsexed 1<sup>st</sup> c-y & an adult male) at Wild Duck Lake on 8<sup>th</sup>.

**Common Buzzard** *Buteo buteo japonicus*

Four bird-days. Noted on three dates.

\*\*\*A 1<sup>st</sup> c-y at Great Wall on 7<sup>th</sup> showed an aberrant white rump...

**Rough-legged Buzzard** *Buteo lagopus*

One at Wild Duck Lake on 8<sup>th</sup> (instead of the hoped-for Upland Buzzard *Buteo hemilasius!*).

**Common Coot** *Fulica atra*

30+ showed well at Wild Duck Lake on 8<sup>th</sup>.

**Siberian Crane** *Grus leucogeranus*

101 bird-days. 46 migr on 6<sup>th</sup> & 55 migr on 7<sup>th</sup>.

\*\*\*It was simply outstanding to be there for this textbook example of weather-triggered migration: how often has it occurred that the weather maps have suggested that something – maybe not something as major as what we witnessed, but at least *something* – would happen...and then: not much going on at all!?

**White-naped Crane** *Grus vipio*

Five at Wild Duck Lake on 8<sup>th</sup>.

**Common Crane** *Grus grus*

494+ bird-days. 141+ migr on 6<sup>th</sup> & c40 migr on 7<sup>th</sup>, and 310 at Wild Duck Lake on 8<sup>th</sup>.

**Hooded Crane** *Grus monacha*

92 bird-days. 61 migr on 6<sup>th</sup> & 31 migr on 7<sup>th</sup>.

**Red-crowned Crane** *Grus japonensis*

282 bird-days. Five migr on 6<sup>th</sup> & 277 (in 24 flocks) migr on 7<sup>th</sup>.

\*\*\*Seeing this emblematic species in such numbers (possibly the highest day count for more than a decade?) was very special – and made more so by the fact that it doesn't seem to ever swing by the Beijing area.

**Northern Lapwing** *Vanellus vanellus*

At Beidaihe two on 6<sup>th</sup> & one on 7<sup>th</sup>.

**Kentish Plover** *Charadrius alexandrinus*

At Beidaihe two on 6<sup>th</sup> & one on 7<sup>th</sup>.

**Eurasian Curlew** *Numenius arquata*

One at Beidaihe on 6<sup>th</sup>.

**Far Eastern Curlew** *Numenius madagascariensis*

Two at Beidaihe on 6<sup>th</sup>.

**Spotted Redshank** *Tringa erythropus*

One at Beidaihe on 6<sup>th</sup>.

**Dunlin** *Calidris alpina*

Five at Beidaihe on 6<sup>th</sup>.

**Black-tailed Gull** *Larus crassirostris*

At Beidaihe 75 on 6<sup>th</sup> & 40+ on 7<sup>th</sup>.

**Common Gull** *Larus canus*

360+ bird-days. Noted on three dates – c160 at Beidaihe on 6<sup>th</sup> incl three 1<sup>st</sup> c-y *kamtschatschensis*, while a singleton at Wild Duck Lake on 8<sup>th</sup> was a *heinei*.

**'Mongolian' Gull** *Larus (cachinnans) mongolicus*

Four 1<sup>st</sup> c-y at Beidaihe on 6<sup>th</sup>.

**Heuglin's Gull** *Larus (fuscus) taimyrensis*

Five bird-days. Noted on three dates – it was nice to see an adult at Beidaihe on 6<sup>th</sup>...

**Common Black-headed Gull** *Larus ridibundus*

Fairly common at Beidaihe – and ten at Wild Duck Lake on 8<sup>th</sup>.

**'Herring'-type Gull** *Larus vegae* / *Larus (cachinnans) mongolicus* / *Larus (fuscus) taimyrensis*

200 at Beidaihe on 7<sup>th</sup>.

**Oriental Turtle Dove** *Streptopelia orientalis*

21 bird-days. Noted on three dates.

**Eurasian Collared Dove** *Streptopelia decaocto*

Three at Beidaihe on 6<sup>th</sup>.

**Spotted Dove** *Streptopelia chinensis*

Eight bird-days. Noted on three dates.

**Common Kingfisher** *Alcedo atthis*

One at Summer Palace on 5<sup>th</sup>.

**Hoopoe** *Upupa epops*

Perhaps the same singleton at Beidaihe on both 6+7<sup>th</sup>.

**Grey-capped Pygmy Woodpecker** *Dendrocopos canicapillus*

Two at Botanical Gardens on 5<sup>th</sup> & one at Great Wall on 8<sup>th</sup>.

**Great Spotted Woodpecker** *Dendrocopos major*

Singles on three dates.

**Grey-headed Woodpecker** *Picus canus*

Two both at Botanical Gardens on 5<sup>th</sup> & at Beidaihe on 6<sup>th</sup>.

**Chinese Grey Shrike** *Lanius sphenocercus*

No fewer than four putting on a terrific show at Wild Duck Lake on 8<sup>th</sup> – what a bird!

**Eurasian Jay** *Garrulus glandarius*

Two at Great Wall on 7<sup>th</sup>.

**Azure-winged Magpie** *Cyanopica cyanus*

c144 bird-days. Noted only @ Beijing – main event c100 at Botanical Gardens on 5<sup>th</sup>.

**Red-billed Blue Magpie** *Urocissa erythrorhyncha*

36 bird-days. Noted daily.

**Common Magpie** *Pica pica*

Common – not systematically recorded.

**Daurian Jackdaw** *Corvus dauuricus*

36 – a flock of five pied adults & 31 all-dark 1<sup>st</sup> c-y – flying by at Wild Duck Lake on 8<sup>th</sup>.

**Carrion Crow** *Corvus corone*

Five at Summer Palace on 5<sup>th</sup> & four at Wild Duck lake on 8<sup>th</sup>.

**Large-billed Crow** *Corvus macrorhynchos*  
12+ bird-days. Noted on three dates.

**Bohemian Waxwing** *Bombycilla garrulous*  
One at Great Wall on 7<sup>th</sup>.

**Japanese Waxwing** *Bombycilla japonica*  
One at Great Wall on 7<sup>th</sup>.

**'Eastern' Great Tit** *Parus minor*  
37 bird-days. Noted daily.

**Yellow-bellied Tit** *Parus venustus*  
41 bird-days – 36 at Botanical Gardens on 5<sup>th</sup> & five at Beidaihe the next day.

**Coal Tit** *Parus ater*  
Two at Beidaihe on 6<sup>th</sup> & one at Great Wall the next day.

**Marsh Tit** *Parus palustris jeholicus*  
Seven bird-days. Noted on three dates.

**Songar Tit** *Parus songarus stotzneri*  
One at Great Wall on 8<sup>th</sup>.

**Chinese Penduline Tit** *Remiz consobrinus*  
21 (incl four 'scoped!) at Beidaihe on 6<sup>th</sup> & two at Wild Duck Lake on 8<sup>th</sup>.

**'Silver-throated' Tit** *Aegithalos glaucocularis*<sup>^</sup> *vinaceus*  
14+ at Botanical Gardens on 5<sup>th</sup> & six at Great Wall on 7<sup>th</sup>.  
\*\*\*^IOC, following HBW, elevates the taxa *vinaceus* & *glaucogularis* to full species status as 'Silver-throated Bushtit' *Aegithalos glaucogularis* - as recently as 2008, however, the notion of *vinaceus* as a possible split was firmly booh'd by group members.

**Mongolian Lark** *Melanocorypha mongolica*  
Two at Wild Duck Lake on 8<sup>th</sup>.

**Asian Short-toed Lark** *Calandrella cheleensis*  
One heard at Beidaihe on 6<sup>th</sup> & four at Wild Duck Lake on 8<sup>th</sup>.

**Eurasian Skylark** *Alauda arvensis*  
128+ bird-days. Noted on three dates.

**Chinese Hill Warbler** *Rhopophilus pekinensis*  
17 bird-days. Noted on three dates – main event one seen at <6m at Great Wall on 7<sup>th</sup>: WOW!

**Chinese Bulbul** *Pycnonotus sinensis*  
45 bird-days. Noted only on 5<sup>th</sup>...

**Dusky Warbler** *Phylloscopus fuscatus*  
Three (incl one seen well) at Beidaihe on 6<sup>th</sup>.

**Pallas' Leaf Warbler** *Phylloscopus proregulus*

18 bird-days. Noted on three dates – main event ten at Botanical Gardens on 5<sup>th</sup>.

**Yellow-browed Warbler** *Phylloscopus inornatus*

Three in a grove of trees filled to bursting with migrants at Beidaihe on 6<sup>th</sup>.

**Pere David's Laughingthrush** *Garrulax davidi*

36 bird-days. Noted on three dates – main event 25 at Great Wall on 7<sup>th</sup>.

**Vinous-throated Parrotbill** *Paradoxornis webbianus*

70+ at Great Wall on 7<sup>th</sup> & 115 at Wild Duck Lake on 8<sup>th</sup>.

**Goldcrest** *Regulus regulus*

Five at Great Wall on 7<sup>th</sup>.

**Northern Wren** *Troglodytes troglodytes*

Four bird-days. Noted on two dates.

**Chinese Nuthatch** *Sitta villosa*

Three at Botanical Gardens on 5<sup>th</sup> & one at Great Wall on 7<sup>th</sup>.

**\*\*\*Crested Myna** *Acridotheres cristellatus* Feral

Eight at Summer Palace on 5<sup>th</sup>.

**White-cheeked Starling** *Sturnus cineraceus*

At Beidaihe four on 6<sup>th</sup> & c15 on 7<sup>th</sup>.

**Chinese Blackbird** *Turdus mandarinus*

Four at Botanical Gardens on 5<sup>th</sup>.

**Naumann's Thrush** *Turdus naumanni*

90 bird-days. Noted daily – main event 51 (14 *naumanni*, one *eunomus*, one intergrade & the rest ‘?’) at Great Wall on 7<sup>th</sup>.

**Northern Red-flanked Bluetail** *Tarsiger cyanurus*

23 bird-days. Noted only at Beidaihe: 20 (incl three adult males!) on 6<sup>th</sup> & three the next day.

**Daurian Redstart** *Phoenicurus aureoreus*

Single males at Beidaihe on both 6+7<sup>th</sup>.

**‘Siberian’ Stonechat** *Saxicola ‘torquatus’*

One female at Beidaihe on 6<sup>th</sup>.

\*\*\*NOT elevated to full species status by e.g. Svensson *et al.* (2009), who treated ‘Eastern Stonechat’ as a subspecies group under ‘Common Stonechat’ and dealt with it in a separate account only ‘for practical reasons’.

**Eurasian Tree Sparrow** *Passer montanus*

Common – not systematically recorded.

**Alpine Accentor** *Prunella collaris*

Four at Great Wall on 7<sup>th</sup>.

**Siberian Accentor** *Prunella montanella*

56 bird-days. Noted daily – main event no fewer than 49 (of which quite a few showed well!) at Great Wall on 7<sup>th</sup>.



**Olive-backed Pipit** *Anthus hodgsoni*

Four at Beidaihe on 6<sup>th</sup>.

**Buff-bellied Pipit** *Anthus rubescens japonicus*

12 bird-days. Fly-overs were recorded on three dates...

**Water Pipit** *Anthus spinoletta blakistoni*

24 bird-days. Noted on three dates.

**Brambling** *Fringilla montifringilla*

630+ bird-days. Noted daily – main event c525 at Botanical Gardens on 5<sup>th</sup>.

**Oriental Greenfinch** *Carduelis sinica*

Eight at Botanical Gardens on 5<sup>th</sup> & 14 (sitting up nicely) at Great Wall on 8<sup>th</sup>.

**Eurasian Siskin** *Carduelis spinus*

Two at Beidaihe on 6<sup>th</sup>.

**Pallas's Rosefinch** *Carpodacus roseus*

A flock of four migr at Botanical Gardens on 5<sup>th</sup> & a flock of ten ditto at Beidaihe the next morning.

**Hawfinch** *Coccothraustes coccothraustes*

30 bird-days. Noted daily – main event ten, incl several 'scoped at close range as they sat out in the top of a leafless tree, at Great Wall on 8<sup>th</sup>.

**Chinese Grosbeak** *Eophona migratoria*

Eight at Botanical Gardens on 5<sup>th</sup>.

**Pine Bunting** *Emberiza leucocephalos*

Three at Beidaihe on 6<sup>th</sup> & 15 at Wild Duck Lake on 8<sup>th</sup> – BVD!

**Eastern Rock Bunting** *Emberiza godlewskii*

Six at Botanical Gardens on 5<sup>th</sup> & five at Great Wall on 7<sup>th</sup>.

**Meadow Bunting** *Emberiza cioides*

Four at Great Wall on 7<sup>th</sup> – one 'scoped as it sat out singing...

**Tristram's Bunting** *Emberiza tristrami*

Two creeping about on a slope at Botanical Gardens on 5<sup>th</sup>.

**Little Bunting** *Emberiza pusilla*

One showing well at Botanical Gardens on 5<sup>th</sup> & two at Beidaihe the next morning.

**Yellow-browed Bunting** *Emberiza chrysophrys*

Two at Beidaihe on 6<sup>th</sup> – BVD.

**Rustic Bunting** *Emberiza rustica*

Seven at Beidaihe on 6<sup>th</sup> & four at Great Wall on 7<sup>th</sup>.

**Yellow-throated Bunting** *Emberiza elegans*

22 bird-days. Noted daily – hard-to-beat views of four males as they 'migrated through the bushes' along an unrestored section of the Great Wall on 7<sup>th</sup>.

